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 File 148:Gale Group Trade & Industry DB 1976-2003/Jul 09  
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Set	Items	Description
S1	1174	((WARRANTY OR (SERVICE () PLAN)) (S) REGISTER?)
S2	50	S1 AND (REGISTER? (4N) (ONLINE OR WEBSITE OR E-COMMERCE OR INTERNET))
S3	22	S2 NOT PY>1999
S4	6642	(SERVICE () PLAN)
S5	33	S4 AND (DIGITAL () CAMERA)
S6	20	RD (unique items)
S7	2188	(WARRANTY OR (SERVICE () PLAN)) (6N) (INTERNET OR ONLINE OR WEBSITE OR E-COMMERCE OR WEB OR HOMEPAGE OR (HOME () PAGE))
S8	205	S7 AND (ONLINE OR WEBSITE OR (HOME () PAGE) OR INTERNET) (-8N) (REGISTER? OR REGISTRATION OR (SIGN? () UP))
S9	4	S8 AND (DIGITAL () CAMERA)
S10	24	S8 AND ((SELECT? OR CHOOS? OR PICK? OR BROWS?) (7N) (PLAN - OR WARRANTY))
S11	9638	(WARRANTY OR (SERVICE () PLAN)) (S) (INTERNET OR ONLINE OR WEBSITE OR E-COMMERCE OR WEB OR HOMEPAGE OR (HOME () PAGE))
S12	0	(BUNDLING () SERVICE) (5N) (DIGITAL () CAMERA)
S13	0	(SERVICE () PLAN) (6N) (CAMERA)
S14	0	(SERVICE () PLAN) (5N) (PHOTOGRAPHY)
S15	3562	(DIGITAL () CAMERA) (8N) (PRINT? OR DEVELOP?)
S16	376	S15 AND ((PLAN OR SERVICE) (5N) (PRINT? OR DEVELOP?))
S17	100	S16 NOT PY>1999
S18	75	RD (unique items)
S19	546	(REGISTER? OR REGISTRATION) (8N) (CAMERA)
S20	39	S19 AND ((PLAN OR WARRANTY OR SERVICE) (S) (CAMERA))
S21	16	S20 NOT PY>1999
S22	11	RD (unique items)
S23	578	(DIGITAL () CAMERA) (S) (ACCOUNT OR MEMBER?)
S24	213	S23 NOT PY>1999
S25	155	RD (unique items)
S26	3493500	(INTERNET OR ONLINE OR (WEB () SITE))
S27	93	S25 AND (INTERNET OR ONLINE OR (WEB () SITE))
S28	38	(DIGITAL () CAMERA) AND (FREE () MEMBERSHIP)
S29	15	S28 NOT PY>1999
S30	9	RD (unique items)

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Set	Items	Description
S1	63	(SUBSCRIPTION OR SUBSCRIBE OR SUBSCRIBING) (S) (DIGITAL () CAMERA)
S2	13	S1 NOT PY>1999
S3	11	RD (unique items)
S4	25	(FREE () (DEVELOPING OR PRINTS)) (S) (DIGITAL () CAMERA)
S5	1701	(MENU OR CATALOG) (5N) (DEVELOPING OR PRINTS)
S6	27	S5 AND (DIGITAL () CAMERA)
S7	16	S6 NOT PY>1999
S8	11	RD (unique items)
S9	1282	(MAINTENANCE () PLAN)
S10	25	S9 AND ((MENU OR SELECT? OR CATALOG) (6N) PLAN)
S11	21	S10 NOT PY>1999
S12	17	RD (unique items)

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TS10/9/9 15

10/9/9 (Item 9 from file: 16)  
DIALOG(R)File 16:Gale Group PROMT(R)  
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05811527 Supplier Number: 50316988 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)  
**Toro Selects SIGNAL Internet Technologies for Web-Based Warranty  
Registration And Claims Processing**  
PR Newswire, p915SFMTU03  
Sept 15, 1998  
Language: English Record Type: Fulltext  
Article Type: Article  
Document Type: Newswire; Trade  
Word Count: 729

## TEXT:

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 15 /PRNewswire/ -- SIGNAL Internet Technologies Inc. today announced that The Toro Company (NYSE: TTC), the Bloomington, Minn. manufacturer of landscaping products for homes, golf courses and commercial landscapes, is now using the SegWay Suite(TM), SIGNAL's comprehensive electronic commerce software solution, to provide Web-based warranty registration and claims processing for Toro's SAP R/3(TM) system. The application, which has been used by Toro dealers since this July, integrates warranty information from four different systems on the company's mainframe computer with a customer master file residing on a SAP R/3 client/server system. SIGNAL made the announcement at the SAP SAPPHIRE(R) user group event in Los Angeles, booth #559.

Dr. Cynthia Love, director of customer service systems for Toro, said Toro executives wanted a better way to support a worldwide community of customers. "We wanted to provide readily-accessible information and support to a disparate group of customers from 80 countries who use multiple currencies and languages. For example, we support about 145 distributors around the world, 6,000 to 6,500 dealers and million of consumers as well as resorts, amusement parks and other types of facilities that use our outdoor landscape products."

Love said Toro determined that 63% of their customer base had Internet access, so the company decided to build a system that customers could access over the Internet using a Web browser. During their search for a software application developer, they received bids from 20 different companies, including SIGNAL. Toro's Manager of Continuous Improvement, Gayle Tangen said, "We chose SIGNAL because they could guarantee to match the e-commerce application with our existing business processes, and deliver a completed system within 90 days. They also had a proven track record with other companies such as Michelin, and understood the dynamics of the warranty process from the end-user perspective." Tangen added that SIGNAL was able to implement the system in only 60 days using its GateWay(TM) adapter for SAP systems.

"Users love the system," Love said. "It's easy to enter information from a standard Web browser, and dealers get instant credit for valid warranty claims. Previously, they had to wait 60 days for claims to be processed."

"The most rewarding aspect of our collaboration with Toro is that we've been able to help them improve responsiveness to their customers," said James Graham, SIGNAL's chief executive officer. "The industry has been talking a lot about the potential benefits of electronic commerce over the Internet for several years now. Systems such as the one we've implemented at Toro are delivering on that promise."

SIGNAL's SegWay Suite connects customers, distributors, suppliers, prospects and employees to legacy databases and systems. SegWay uses an intuitive interface and appropriate graphics to simplify the creation of

common business applications such as order management, invoice inquiry and order placement, reducing cost and complexity, and speeding deployment of a full-fledged business solution. The system architecture leverages the data from multiple sources within a single application. SegWay's tightly integrated "end-to-end" electronic commerce framework links a company's front- and back- office applications to external partners in the most complete solution available today.

#### About the Companies

The Toro Company has more than 4,000 employees around the world and is a leading provider of outdoor maintenance and beautification products for home, recreation and commercial landscapes. Information about Toro is available on the Web at <http://www.toro.com>.

SIGNAL Internet Technologies Inc., a national company headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania provides the software system necessary to implement electronic commerce. SIGNAL's systems use the Internet to securely connect customers, distributors, suppliers, prospects and employees, while protecting their investment in existing systems. Its product offering, SegWay Suite, includes e-business applications, a Web application development environment and complete electronic commerce framework. Information about SIGNAL and SegWay Suite is available on the Web at <http://www.signalnet.com>.

SOURCE SIGNAL Internet Technologies, Inc.

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09/15/98

/CONTACT: Mike Ripple of SIGNAL Internet Technologies, 412-875-2000, or [mripple@signalnet.com](mailto:mripple@signalnet.com); or Jill Dornan of Brodeur Porter Novelli, 408-324-4848, or [jdornan@brodeur.com](mailto:jdornan@brodeur.com), for SIGNAL Internet Technologies; or Don St. Dennis of Toro Company, 612-887-8960, or [pr@toro.com](mailto:pr@toro.com)/

/Web site: <http://www.toro.com/>

/Web site: <http://www.signalnet.com/>

(TTC)

CO: SIGNAL Internet Technologies Inc.; The Toro Company

ST: California, Minnesota, Pennsylvania

IN: CPR MLM

SU:

KA-CS

-- SFMTU03 --

3156 09/15/98 13:30 EDT <http://www.prnewswire.com>

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PUBLISHER NAME: PR Newswire Association, Inc.

COMPANY NAMES: \*Toro Co.; SIGNAL Internet Technologies Inc.

EVENT NAMES: \*260 (General services); 330 (Product information)

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: \*1USA (United States)

PRODUCT NAMES: \*3524000 (Power Lawn & Garden Equip); 7372640

(Electronic Commerce Software)

INDUSTRY NAMES: BUS (Business, General); BUSN (Any type of business)

NAICS CODES: 333112 (Lawn and Garden Tractor and Home Lawn and Garden

Equipment Manufacturing); 51121 (Software Publishers)

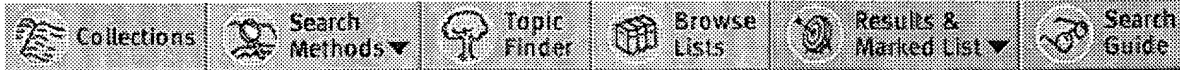
SPECIAL FEATURES: LOB; COMPANY

10/9/15 (Item 3 from file: 47)

DIALOG(R) File 47:Gale Group Magazine DB(TM)

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## **www.RCA.com Website Enhanced with Dealer Locator Service, Detailed Product Specs, Online Owner's Manuals and Warranty Registration, and Consumer Purchase Options**

PR Newswire; New York; Oct 14, 1999;

**Start Page:** 1**Dateline:** Indiana**Personal Names:** Bosler, Greg**Abstract:**

*The new RCA.com website was unveiled today as the latest move by Thomson Consumer Electronics to capitalize on the emerging **Internet** economy and electronic commerce. Just last week, Thomson announced shipment and **online** availability of the RCA LYRA personal audio player at the companion LyraZone.com website. Now, the LYRA will be joined by more than 100 other RCA products shipped directly from the manufacturer.*

*Thomson Direct, Incorporated (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Thomson Consumer Electronics), has started **online** consumer sales and shipment of more than 100 models of television sets, DVD players, VCRs, camcorders, select audio/video accessories, the RCA Digital Cable Modem, and audio products -- including the new RCA LYRA personal digital audio player.*

*"Today, we announce the most comprehensive RCA database of home entertainment product information. Consumers will be able to compare features, find a dealer, check out the owner's manual, and even buy our products right from their computer through the new RCA.com," said Mike O'Hara, Senior Vice President of Thomson Consumer Electronics.*

**Full Text:**

Copyright PR Newswire - NY Oct 14, 1999

Media teleconference to be held Thursday, October 14

at 2:00pm Eastern Daylight Time

INDIANAPOLIS, Oct. 14 /PRNewswire/ – With the holidays fast approaching, consumers now have the perfect place to learn more about and buy the latest home entertainment products – <http://www.RCA.com>.

The new RCA.com website was unveiled today as the latest move by Thomson Consumer Electronics to capitalize on the emerging Internet economy and electronic commerce. Just last week, Thomson announced shipment and online availability of the RCA LYRA personal audio player at the companion LyraZone.com website. Now, the LYRA will be joined by more than 100 other RCA products shipped directly from the manufacturer.

Thomson Direct, Incorporated (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Thomson Consumer Electronics), has started online consumer sales and shipment of more than 100 models of television sets, DVD players, VCRs, camcorders, select audio/video accessories, the RCA Digital Cable Modem, and audio products – including the new RCA

LYRA personal digital audio player.

"Today, we announce the most comprehensive RCA database of home entertainment product information. Consumers will be able to compare features, find a dealer, check out the owner's manual, and even buy our products right from their computer through the new RCA.com," said Mike O'Hara, Senior Vice President of Thomson Consumer Electronics.

The number of RCA products available online is planned to grow over time, according to O'Hara.

"It's clear to Thomson that the Internet is changing the world in which people research, shop, and ultimately buy goods and services. RCA.com will provide a valuable vehicle to position our brand, products, and support services directly to the consumer, which is an ideal way to develop a lifetime relationship. And we are committed to pursuing electronic commerce opportunities that also strengthen our current dealer relationships," said O'Hara.

According to O'Hara, "consumers are using the Internet in increasing numbers to research product information, comparison shop, and determine purchase options. Recently, Consumer Electronics Manufacturers Association research showed that more than 75% of online consumers who purchase electronics over the next two years will use the Internet to research their purchase. Electronics already rate on the 'top ten list' of things that people buy while online," O'Hara added.

In addition to a Dealer Locator service, consumers will also have instantaneous access to more than 200 RCA product specification records for detailed comparisons. Consumers can easily print owner's manuals for TVs, DVD players, DBS systems, VCRs, camcorders, cable modems, and a variety of audio products. Warranty information and online warranty registration is another feature of RCA.com.

"RCA.com is a destination site designed to provide a vast amount of information on RCA brand products," said Greg Bosler, Vice President of Thomson Direct, Incorporated. "With detailed product specifications, customer service information, technology vignettes, and promotional offers, RCA.com contains the most comprehensive array of information about RCA available anywhere on the Internet," Bosler said.

The new RCA.com website has been in development for eight months with a team of more than 50 Thomson employees working to make the site comprehensive, and easy-to-understand and navigate.

US Interactive, Inc., (Nasdaq: USIT) a leading Internet professional services company that helps world-class organizations think, build and run e-business, created and implemented the RCA.com e-business solution.

"We're thrilled that RCA.com turned to us to help them strengthen their relationship with their consumers and enhance the RCA brand image online," said Steve Zarilli, CEO and president, US Interactive. "Customer satisfaction is key to a successful e-business initiative and RCA.com used our e-Roadmap(R) development plan to implement their e-business solution."

The revamped RCA.com is the latest Internet innovation from Thomson, which last year launched the industry's first business-to-business website – the Thomson Dealer Network. That service is the industry's first website to provide 24-hour, seven-day-a-week information regarding products, ordering and invoice status, claims filing, and current marketing promotions. More than 1,300 Thomson dealers in the U.S. are currently activated on the Thomson Dealer Network. The Thomson Dealer Network will soon expand to Canada, and a European launch through Thomson Multimedia is planned for the year 2000.

This past July, Thomson went online with <http://www.LyraZone.com> to promote the new RCA LYRA personal digital player. The RCA LYRA, a personal digital player that plays multiple compression formats on Skip Free solid-state memory cards, was first available last week to online buyers through the LyraZone.com website.

With more than 100 products now available through [www.RCA.com](http://www.RCA.com), consumers also have three shipping options (UPS, FedEx, and GeoLogistics) to have their purchase delivered right to the front door. Fulfillment of consumer RCA.com orders is coordinated by Memphis-based PFSweb, Inc., which can easily pick and distribute an order directly to the nearby Memphis FedEx hub. Thus, an RCA product ordered from RCA.com before 8:00PM (and which is in stock at PFSweb) can be delivered overnight through the FedEx option.

Selecting a strong fulfillment partner has been critical to the successful launch of the site. Thomson selected PFSweb because of their experience in delivery direct to the consumer from the Internet and their track record for delivering project integrations on time. PFSweb has built a world-class fulfillment and customer care service by integrating technology with sound logistics processes. PFSweb maintains an order accuracy rate of greater than 99% in their distribution centers and answers over 10,000 customer service inquiries per day in their call centers.

Another critical component of the new www.RCA.com service is customer care. More than 50 personnel at Thomson's Indianapolis Customer Care Center will now process and respond to e-mail requests generated by www.RCA.com visitors. E-mail inquiries will be managed using a combination of eGain EMS software and Inference k- Commerce(TM) Mail software that will help Thomson route, track, and respond to the thousands of messages that are expected to be generated. Today, Thomson's 400-person Customer Care Center responds to some 18,000 consumer contacts each day via telephone and standard mail.

Thomson's RCA.com website has been built with an eye on performance and scalability. Thomson selected Vignette StoryServer software as the web development and delivery backbone for the site, which is deployed on highly- available servers that are load balanced by Nortel Networks' Accelar routing switches. The combination of robust hardware and high-performance software will allow the site to scale to the expected peak of Christmas shopping demands in the next few weeks.

"While Thomson sells hundreds of RCA models to a variety of retail customers, there has not been a single place for the consumer to find out about all of these products – until now, at the RCA.com website," Bosler said.

About Thomson Direct, Incorporated:

Thomson Direct, Inc., is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Thomson Consumer Electronics (TCE), the manufacturer and marketer of RCA, PROSCAN and GE brand home entertainment products. TCE is a division of Thomson Multimedia. With sales over \$6 billion in 1998 and 48,000 employees in over 30 countries, Thomson Multimedia is the fourth largest global supplier of consumer electronics products. The Group has four main activities: Displays and Components, Consumer Products, New Media Services, and Patents and Licensing. Thomson develops, manufactures, and sells television displays and components, and consumer products such as televisions, VCRs, camcorders, audio & communications products, digital decoders, DVD players and professional video equipment. SOURCE Thomson Consumer Electronics

#### [Reference]

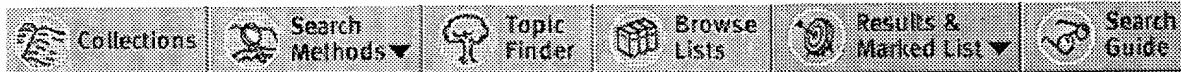
Message No: Industry: INTERNET MULTIMEDIA ONLINE; COMPUTER/ELECTRONICS; RETAIL;

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## Tripp Lite Announces New Online Warranty Registration

*PR Newswire; New York; Jul 15, 1998;***Start Page:** 1**Dateline:** Illinois**Companies:** [Tripp Lite](#)**Abstract:**

CHICAGO, July 15 /PRNewswire/ -- Tripp Lite announces its customers can now register their new UPS Systems or Isobar(R) Premium Surge Suppressors **online**. This service enables users to register their products more quickly and easily than before and also automatically enters them in drawings to win free products or trips.

Each month, Tripp Lite will randomly choose winners from all **warranty registrations** (whether mailed, faxed, or **online**) to win a free Isobar Premium Surge Suppressor or UPS System. As an extra bonus available exclusively to those who register via the **Internet**, twice yearly Tripp Lite will award a free "Get-Away" vacation to a randomly chosen winner. Users' registration cards will be kept in the drawing for one year.

**Full Text:***Copyright PR Newswire - NY Jul 15, 1998*

Industry: COMPUTER/ELECTRONICS; INTERNET MULTIMEDIA ONLINE

CHICAGO, July 15 /PRNewswire/ – Tripp Lite announces its customers can now register their new UPS Systems or Isobar(R) Premium Surge Suppressors online. This service enables users to register their products more quickly and easily than before and also automatically enters them in drawings to win free products or trips.

Unlike many companies, Tripp Lite does not require users to activate their registrations or fill out long forms requiring hard to locate serial numbers and model names in order to be eligible for warranty benefits. "Warranty coverage is automatic upon purchase of our products," said Keelin Wyman, Vice President of Marketing. "We have enough confidence in the quality and reliability of our products and consideration of our customers' time to back up our products without the long and arduous paper trail most companies require."

Each month, Tripp Lite will randomly choose winners from all warranty registrations (whether mailed, faxed, or online) to win a free Isobar Premium Surge Suppressor or UPS System. As an extra bonus available exclusively to those who register via the Internet, twice yearly Tripp Lite will award a free "Get-Away" vacation to a randomly chosen winner. Users' registration cards will be kept in the drawing for one year.

In addition to online registration, Tripp Lite's web site, the PowerZone(TM) offers complete product information, assistance in choosing the right power protection, Year 2000 Compliance information, answers to technical questions/power problems, magazine reprints, a list of Tripp Lite resellers and more.

Tripp Lite has built a reputation as a world leader in power protection solutions by providing enhanced service and innovative products for more than 75 years. Tripp Lite is headquartered in Chicago, Ill., and maintains a



- global presence with fully staffed offices worldwide.

Tripp Lite manufactures more than 300 different power products, including SmartPro(R), DataCenter(TM), Unison(R), Internet Office(TM), OmniSmart(TM), BC Personal(R) and BC Pro(R) UPS lines; PowerAlert(R) Advanced Network Monitoring Software; Isobar(R) Premium Surge Suppressors; Super Series Surge Suppressors; Network Dataline Protectors; and Line Conditioners.

Additional information about Tripp Lite and its products can be found on the PowerZone(TM), Tripp Lite's web site at [www.tripplite.com](http://www.tripplite.com) or by calling Tripp Lite's Customer Support at 773-869-1234.

Tripp Lite is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer. SOURCE Tripp Lite

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27/9/3 (Item 3 from file: 16)  
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06865178 Supplier Number: 58163729 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)

**Ofoto.com Launches Innovative Photo Finishing Service.**

PR Newswire, p0129

Dec 13, 1999

Language: English Record Type: Fulltext

Document Type: Newswire; Trade

Word Count: 574

TEXT:

Ofoto Delivers the Power and Convenience

Of Digital Photography to Millions of Consumers

BERKELEY, Calif., Dec. 13 /PRNewswire/ -- Ofoto Inc., the premiere e-commerce provider of photo finishing services, today announced the launch of a full service Web site (www.ofoto.com) that will deliver the power and convenience of digital photography to millions of consumers. The Ofoto service offers millions of digital camera and scanner owners, along with their friends and family, a convenient way to order high-quality, photographic prints of their own digital images. Ofoto also provides its members access to secure online photo storage and the ability to create albums in an advertising-free environment, all at no cost.

"We are enabling everyone to take advantage of the amazing convenience of digital photography," said James Joaquin, president and CEO, Ofoto. "With photo-quality digital cameras now under \$300, Ofoto offers the missing link to getting real photographic prints delivered with a convenient, easy to use, and very affordable, online photo finishing service."

Transforming Traditional Photo Finishing

The \$33 Billion photo finishing market is rapidly shifting to the Internet. According to Lyra Research the online photo finishing market is expected to be \$3.4 billion by 2002, almost 10% of the entire market in just three years. Ofoto provides consumers an online photo finishing and delivery solution offering convenience, quality, value and security.

\* Convenience -- Ofoto's easy to use Web site allows members to order photographic prints and have them delivered as quickly as the very next

day. There are no membership fees, lengthy registration or complicated

ordering processes. For the first time, consumers can now have their digital images conveniently printed and delivered on real photographic

paper, instead of dealing with the hassles of ink-jet printers.

\* Quality -- Ofoto delivers archive quality, color prints on photographic

paper from Kodak. These prints are processed in Ofoto's own lab using the most advanced digital imaging technology.

\* Value -- Instead of having to develop entire rolls of traditional film,

digital photography has given people the freedom to order prints of just the photos they like, making Ofoto far more affordable than traditional photo finishing.

\* Security -- Once Ofoto members upload their photos to the site they are

stored in a private, secure, and advertising-free environment.

Members' albums are password-protected and available only to those who

are invited to view.

"Ofoto was founded on a very simple idea -- deliver the promise of

digital photography and don't forget the prints," said Kamran Mohsenin, founder and chief product officer, Ofoto. "We are very excited to be launching the most convenient photo finishing service on the Web that delivers real prints to real people."

Ofoto offers a variety of print sizes all at very affordable prices -- 4" X 6" prints for 49 cents, 5" X 7" prints for 99 cents and 8" X 10" prints for \$2.99. Because members can order prints of just the photos they like, Ofoto is far more affordable than traditional photo finishing solutions. Ofoto also offers a variety of elegant frames and framing services for special photographic prints and gift giving. Print quality is always guaranteed with a no questions asked satisfaction guarantee.

About Ofoto, Inc.

Founded in July 1999, Ofoto, Inc. is located in Berkeley, California. Ofoto is the premiere e-commerce photo finishing service for the rapidly expanding digital photography market. Our Web site, [www.ofoto.com](http://www.ofoto.com), is a comprehensive service that allows its members to order high quality photographic prints of their digital pictures and photo merchandise.

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06811441 Supplier Number: 57602779 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)  
**PhotoPoint & iPrint.com Introduce Personalized Photo Gifts in Time for the Holiday Season.**  
PR Newswire, p6714  
Nov 16, 1999  
Language: English Record Type: Fulltext  
Document Type: Newswire; Trade  
Word Count: 654  
TEXT:

New Service Includes Limited Time Offer for Free Customizable Mouse Pads  
LAS VEGAS, Nov. 16 /PRNewswire/ -- Photopoint Booth #NS-68 (LVCC - North Hall) at Comdex. PhotoPoint, the world's largest photo sharing Website, and iPrint.com, a leading online print shop, today announced a partnership that will provide PhotoPoint members with a new, customizable service for ordering personalized gifts that feature their favorite PhotoPoint photos. With the click of a button, members can turn their favorite digital images into unique and special gifts, choosing from such items as mouse pads, T-shirts, mugs, teddy bears, coasters, wall clocks, photo Post-It Note(R) cubes, baby announcements, and more. The companies also announced that they are sponsoring a special, limited time promotion that gives PhotoPoint members a free photo-customized mouse pad in return for some real-time customer feedback.

"It makes perfect sense that, given the strong photo-sharing nature of our membership community, we partner with iPrint.com to provide our members with a means for sharing their favorite images offline," said David Rowley, PhotoPoint president. "We're pleased to be adding this service in time for the upcoming holiday season, and expect that our members will be very creative in choosing unique gifts to further showcase their favorite photos to family and friends."

"iPrint.com is delighted to partner with PhotoPoint, a leading destination for photography enthusiasts," commented Royal P. Farros, CEO and chairman of iPrint.com. "Creating customized photo gifts and momentos couldn't be easier with the iPrint.com service and consumers will save up to 50% off traditional print shop prices."

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#### Free Photo-Customized Mouse Pad Promotion

PhotoPoint offers free membership and unlimited free photo storage, among many other benefits, to photography enthusiasts of all ages and abilities. To encourage its members to take advantage of this new online service, PhotoPoint also announced that it is working with iPrint.com to give away free, photo-customized mouse pads in exchange for user feedback. To take advantage of this free offer, members must fill out a short survey, and agree to pay a nominal shipping and handling fee. The offer is valid for 90 days from today, or until 2,000 members respond. Non-PhotoPoint members only need to sign-up for a free membership to be eligible for the offer.

#### About iPrint.com

iPrint.com, a privately held company with strategic investments from SOFTBANK Technology Ventures, AT&T Ventures, Intel Corporation, Canaan Partners, and ITV (Information Technology Ventures), is a primary supplier of online kiosk systems to the commercial and quick printing industry. iPrint.com's strategic partners include 3M, OfficeMax, Sir Speedy, and other Fortune 500 companies. Founded in 1997, iPrint.com was recently distinguished with an "Innovation in Print" award by CAP Ventures, a leading print research firm, and was included on Upside Magazine's prestigious HOT 100 list of e-commerce companies.

See <http://www.iprint.com> for more information.

## About PhotoPoint

Launched in 1998, PhotoPoint is the Internet's largest free photo sharing community where members have showcased more than 3.5 million photos. The site features a uniquely easy way for anyone to post photos, add captions, organize them into albums, and then send out e-mail announcements to share their albums with friends and family, free of charge. PhotoPoint also sports a comprehensive members photo gallery, organized into Yahoo-style categories, and an exclusive online partnership with Digital Camera Magazine. Additional member services include an e-commerce store for buying digital products, a customized gift buying partnership with iPrint.com, a popular "Photo of the Day" section, lists of the most popular albums, discussion forums, and a chat room where people can discuss their photos and albums. In September, the company was named one of the Top 500 digital media sites by MediaMetrix, a distinction given to ad supported sites and applications that attract the most "unique" visitors over the course of one month. PhotoPoint is headquartered in Mountain View, Calif., at SoftBank's HotBank incubator.

See <http://www.photopoint.com> for more information.

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COMPANY NAMES: \*iPrint Inc.

PRODUCT NAMES: \*2750000 (Commercial Printing)

INDUSTRY NAMES: BUS (Business, General); BUSN (Any type of business)

SIC CODES: 2750 (Commercial Printing)

NAICS CODES: 32311 (Printing)

SPECIAL FEATURES: INDUSTRY; COMPANY

27/9/6 (Item 6 from file: 16)

DIALOG(R) File 16:Gale Group PROMT(R)

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06811441 Supplier Number: 57602779 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)

**PhotoPoint & iPrint.com Introduce Personalized Photo Gifts in Time for the Holiday Season.**

PR Newswire, p6714

Nov 16, 1999

Language: English Record Type: Fulltext

Document Type: Newswire; Trade

Word Count: 654

**TEXT:**

New Service Includes Limited Time Offer for Free Customizable Mouse Pads  
LAS VEGAS, Nov. 16 /PRNewswire/ -- Photopoint Booth #NS-68 (LVCC - North Hall) at Comdex. PhotoPoint, the world's largest photo sharing Website, and iPrint.com, a leading online print shop, today announced a partnership that will provide PhotoPoint members with a new, customizable service for ordering personalized gifts that feature their favorite PhotoPoint photos. With the click of a button, members can turn their favorite digital images into unique and special gifts, choosing from such items as mouse pads, T-shirts, mugs, teddy bears, coasters, wall clocks, photo Post-It Note(R) cubes, baby announcements, and more. The companies also announced that they are sponsoring a special, limited time promotion that gives PhotoPoint members a free photo-customized mouse pad in return for some real-time customer feedback.

"It makes perfect sense that, given the strong photo-sharing nature of our membership community, we partner with iPrint.com to provide our members with a means for sharing their favorite images offline," said David Rowley, PhotoPoint president. "We're pleased to be adding this service in time for the upcoming holiday season, and expect that our members will be very creative in choosing unique gifts to further showcase their favorite photos to family and friends."

"iPrint.com is delighted to partner with PhotoPoint, a leading destination for photography enthusiasts," commented Royal P. Farros, CEO and chairman of iPrint.com. "Creating customized photo gifts and momentos couldn't be easier with the iPrint.com service and consumers will save up to 50% off traditional print shop prices."

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**Free Photo-Customized Mouse Pad Promotion**

PhotoPoint offers free membership and unlimited free photo storage, among many other benefits, to photography enthusiasts of all ages and abilities. To encourage its members to take advantage of this new online service, PhotoPoint also announced that it is working with iPrint.com to give away free, photo-customized mouse pads in exchange for user feedback. To take advantage of this free offer, members must fill out a short survey, and agree to pay a nominal shipping and handling fee. The offer is valid for 90 days from today, or until 2,000 members respond. Non-PhotoPoint members only need to sign-up for a free membership to be eligible for the offer.

**About iPrint.com**

iPrint.com, a privately held company with strategic investments from SOFTBANK Technology Ventures, AT&T Ventures, Intel Corporation, Canaan Partners, and ITV (Information Technology Ventures), is a primary supplier of online kiosk systems to the commercial and quick printing industry. iPrint.com's strategic partners include 3M, OfficeMax, Sir Speedy, and other Fortune 500 companies. Founded in 1997, iPrint.com was recently distinguished with an "Innovation in Print" award by CAP Ventures, a leading print research firm, and was included on Upside Magazine's prestigious HOT 100 list of e-commerce companies.

See <http://www.iprint.com> for more information.

## About PhotoPoint

Launched in 1998, PhotoPoint is the Internet's largest free photo sharing community where members have showcased more than 3.5 million photos. The site features a uniquely easy way for anyone to post photos, add captions, organize them into albums, and then send out e-mail announcements to share their albums with friends and family, free of charge. PhotoPoint also sports a comprehensive members photo gallery, organized into Yahoo-style categories, and an exclusive online partnership with Digital Camera Magazine. Additional member services include an e-commerce store for buying digital products, a customized gift buying partnership with iPrint.com, a popular "Photo of the Day" section, lists of the most popular albums, discussion forums, and a chat room where people can discuss their photos and albums. In September, the company was named one of the Top 500 digital media sites by MediaMetrix, a distinction given to ad supported sites and applications that attract the most "unique" visitors over the course of one month. PhotoPoint is headquartered in Mountain View, Calif., at SoftBank's HotBank incubator.

See <http://www.photopoint.com> for more information.

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PUBLISHER NAME: PR Newswire Association, Inc.

COMPANY NAMES: \*iPrint Inc.

PRODUCT NAMES: \*2750000 (Commercial Printing)

INDUSTRY NAMES: BUS (Business, General); BUSN (Any type of business)

SIC CODES: 2750 (Commercial Printing)

NAICS CODES: 32311 (Printing)

SPECIAL FEATURES: INDUSTRY; COMPANY

TS18/9/1 5 7 8 12 24 35

**18/9/1 (Item 1 from file: 16)**

DIALOG(R)File 16:Gale Group PROMT(R)

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07053129 Supplier Number: 58381082 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)

**Gretag Imaging invests in Sienna Imaging. (Company Business and Marketing)**

The Seybold Report on Publishing Systems, v28, n18, p21

June 21, 1999

ISSN: 0736-7260

Language: English Record Type: Fulltext

Document Type: Newsletter; Trade

Word Count: 220

TEXT:

Gretag Imaging Holding AG, the supplier of equipment and software for use in photo labs, has made a minority investment in Sienna Imaging, which also serves the photo lab market. The amount of the investment wasn't disclosed. Gretag and Sienna plan to collaborate in the development and distribution of each other's products in professional photo lab markets.

Sienna, which recently took over the new digital camera development operation of Dicomed, plans to use its partnerships to offer complete systems to professional lab owners. The deal with Gretag allows both companies to expand their presence in the marketplace and explore opportunities for growth. The companies were already in cooperation through Sienna's distribution of Cymbolic Sciences' printers into the professional market.

Sienna will continue to be privately owned and operated, with the majority of shares held by employees. The Gretag investment will not affect the continued development and sale of Sienna OEM products for the minilab and wholesale lab markets.

Gretag Imaging Holding AG, a public company registered on the Swiss exchange, is the parent company of Gretag Imaging, which recently acquired Cymbolic Sciences and Raster Graphics.

Another company, GretagMacbeth, now completely separate and independent, but evolved from the same Gretag origins, was taken public in a separate stock offering. A supplier of color-measurement instruments, GretagMacbeth acquired Logo Kommunikations late last year.

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PUBLISHER NAME: Seybold Publications, Inc.

COMPANY NAMES: \*Gretag Imaging AG; Sienna Imaging Inc.

EVENT NAMES: \*150 (Acquisitions &amp; mergers); 160 (Asset sales &amp; divestitures)

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: \*4EXSI (Switzerland); 1USA (United States)

PRODUCT NAMES: \*7372459 (Image Processing Software NEC)

INDUSTRY NAMES: BUSN (Any type of business); CMPT (Computers and Office Automation); PUBL (Publishing)

NAICS CODES: 51121 (Software Publishers)

SPECIAL FEATURES: COMPANY

**18/9/5 (Item 5 from file: 16)**

DIALOG(R)File 16:Gale Group PROMT(R)

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06672422 Supplier Number: 55816912 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)

**Testing the Digital Minilab Waters.**

Lansky, Jerry

Photo Trade News, v63, n8, p28



18/9/5 (Item 5 from file: 16)  
DIALOG(R)File 16:Gale Group PROMT(R)  
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06672422 Supplier Number: 55816912 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)

**Testing the Digital Minilab Waters.**

Lansky, Jerry

Photo Trade News, v63, n8, p28

August, 1999

ISSN: 0031-8590

Language: English Record Type: Fulltext

Document Type: Magazine/Journal; Trade

Word Count: 2859

**TEXT:**

Besides innovating with product that could conceivably put Konica among the serious players in the minilab equipment business, the introduction of the QD-21 lit a fire under the rest of the industry.

It has been a busy year on the digital minilab front. While the digital minilab has been on the horizon for some time now the spotlight has begun to shine much more brightly on this technology since PMA '99.

Fuji introduced us all to the digital concept about 3-4 years ago with its Frontier model -- the first digital minilab but priced beyond the minilab market.

Two years ago, Konica brought out its QD-21 at New Orleans PMA. It created quite a stir with its digestible price and sexy features. Besides innovating with a product that could conceivably put Konica among the serious players in the minilab equipment business, the introduction of the QD-21 lit a fire under the rest of the industry. At the Las Vegas PMA this year: Fuji introduced two laser models, the Frontier 350 and 370; Noritsu was prepared to introduce its 2701 digital and at literally the last minute worked a deal with Kodak to partner with a second one, the 2711 (Noritsu has just added a third digital model, 2801, with a different print engine but no other details are available as yet); Gretag showed its MasterFlex digital. The other prime supplier, Agfa, does not have a 'digital minilab' as of yet.

**Konica out front**

As this is written, only Konica is installing digitals as the rest of the guys are playing catch-up. Fuji's 350 will begin shipping this summer, the 370 in early fall; Gretag digital is scheduled for the fourth quarter; Noritsu's 2701 is due late summer-early fall while the Kodak-partnered 2711 (which has a substantial lead in backorders over its roommate) should be shipping late fall. All manufacturers are claiming encouraging levels of backorders on their digital models.

But for now at least, Konica has the ocean to itself and some minilabbers are anxious to be the first kids on the block with the new toy--the early adopters.

Being an early adopter presents special challenges, as might be expected. People who are such understand and expect these things. The earliest Konica betas had problems, as would be expected, but the dealers I spoke with were pleased with the hand-holding Konica and its tech reps provided. They acknowledge that the problems are not ignored. The only surprise for one dealer was that he felt that the cost of the chemicals, which are unique to the QD-21, were excessive. He can't change, either.

What's up out there?

What's happening at the retail-marketing-merchandising level is certainly as interesting as it is diverse. One aspect to going to market with the QD-21, especially for the early adopters, is how to price the myriad of services that the machine can perform. Going into the one-hour business with a C-41 offering is easy: just see how the competition is pricing a 24-exp., 35mm roll and move from there. But what do you charge

*slightly relevant*

for an 8 x 10 print that has four different images on it; or a 5 x 7 with a unique border; or a print from someone's digital camera smart card? Pricing the long list of unique digital services is a special challenge for which there are few guidelines.

Some of the dealers I spoke with were not totally aware of the variety of products that the machine could produce. This was especially the case for those with the Konica workstation companion to the QD-21. Communicating those services to the consumer is its own challenge.

I spoke to some newbie dealers who already have QD-21's installed in their stores to see what it's like being the first kids on the block with digital -- and maybe months (or even years) ahead of their competition.

Grand Photo, St. Paul, MN: Mark McCoy opened his own minilab at this location 12 years ago and, as is typical for an owner-operated, single lab located in a neighborhood location, has a loyal customer base that supports a staff of four.

Mark opened his lab with a Gretag, switched to a Noritsu 1201, then a Konica 858 before deciding on a QD-21. He is an early adopter of the early adopters as his system was installed last October and has already seen three software upgrades. Why digital? "I was anxious to offer expanded services to my customers," he said. "Even a Walgreens can do a pretty good job with C-41. We had to be different. Digital represents a good dog and pony show for us."

His early concern was how his customers would react to a print made digitally rather than optically. "Yes, a few asked about it, but they don't seem to notice any difference. It was a relief to me." To allay fears that a digital print is something to be cautious about, Mark has a sign saying that the prints "are made on photographic paper."

As would be expected of a smaller lab operation Mark cannot afford mass media advertising but has drawn from an ample supply of in-store promotion/merchandising materials offered by Konica. He is presently installing the new QD-21 workstation and when it is up and running he plans to have sample output prints showing the different borders option, and templates on display.

His most popular services are prints from zip drives and CD. He finds that floppy disks generally yield prints of poorer quality. Downloading a new roll to a zip drive is another asked-for service. He hasn't seen any orders for prints from a digital camera smart card so far though he expects that sort of business in the future.

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As for pricing, Mark considers him self a "conservative, capitalistic Republican." He charges \$3.99 to open a digital file from a zip, floppy or CD and then charges his regular reprint price for any output. So, if someone wants a 4 x 6 print from a zip drive, he'll pay \$3.99 plus 59-cents. Mark charges \$10.90 for standard 24-exp. d&p with one-hour turn around or \$8.85 next day. APS, which accounts for about 8-10% of incoming rolls, goes for about \$14.

Shop & Save & Do Digital?

Shop & Save, Pittsburgh, PA: At first blush I would say that a supermarket would be the last place to look for a digital minilab. The type of services offered and the skill required in both selling the services and operating the equipment would not suggest a supermarket as a logical venue. But if you look into the West Mifflin location of Shop & Save, that's what you'll see.

Rick Bernosky is the human resources exec for two S&S (of the 100+ store chain in greater Pittsburgh) that are operated by the same owner. Rich serves, more or less, as the overseer of the photo processing activity--though he admitted it's strictly a part-time job.

Why would a supermarket with a limited commitment to photographic processing venture into something as new as a digital minilab? Rick said, "We had to form a new niche for ourselves--we had to differentiate." He said the competition in the area is fierce and that for many of his

competitors what was once a profit maker had become a loss leader department. He felt the QD-21 would open new doors.

Rick had two Noritsu machines, a 1501 and 1701, that were needed when S&S roll counts were at peak levels in 1994-95. They were both traded in for the QD-21 and has been Rick's only - system since April. The photo processing department is located at the front entrance and operates at hours that would drive a photo specialist to drink: 7 a.m.-10 p.m., seven days a week. Staff is 5-6 people. Training for the QD-21 was provided by two Konica techs that worked side-by-side with the staff for a full week. Rick said that to have sent people to a central training facility would have been too disruptive and only a few would have been exposed to the program.

Digital services are being promoted through local newspapers with a new 'special' each week--in the tradition of supermarket merchandising. For Father's Day, S&S offered a b&w or sepia tone reprint (a product off the QD-21) from a neg or slide at the same price as a regular reprint. (Incremental cost to S&S: nothing.) Other weekly specials have included: buy one print-to-print, get one free; buy two reprints, get one free. There is always an ongoing promo.

To expose the digital services in-store, Rick made samples of each of the QD-21's products (Q-file, borders, package print layouts, etc.) and coordinated them into a window display. Seasonally, the store's checkout counters will distribute processing literature.

So far, Rick is offering a somewhat limited menu of digital services: print-to-print, print from floppy, zip and CD-ROM, and various border and package print options. He has not yet purchased the companion workstation to the QD-21. "We don't want to bite off more than we can chew."

Rick says he has been able to reduce d&p pricing by about \$1 due to savings in paper waste (down from 10-20% to 2-3%) and saving by a switch from Kodak to Agfa paper. He now gets \$9.59 for a twin print order of 24-exp, 35mm. As for digital, Rick said, "Setting prices has been difficult." He looked to Konica and his outlab processor, Fuji Color Processing, for guidance.

Among his digital services: print from zip, floppy or CD, 75-cents; package print \$4.99 for a 5 x 7 and \$6.99 for 11 x 14; 4 x 6 with text imprint--\$5.99 for a 12-pack, \$9.99 for 25-pack, \$17.99 for 50-pack; b&w or sepia print from a color neg or slide, \$1.

Rick says his experience with digital services has been a positive one and is planning to offer it in a new store scheduled for opening this fall.

Biggs Camera Center, Charlotte, NC: This is a 40-year-old full service camera store of about 5,000 sq. ft. located on a heavily travelled route not far from the center of town. A member of the Pro Group, this is a second generation business started by Neil Biggs with son Steve now at the helm. The firm has been in the on-site business for about 20 years, according to Neil, who refers to processing as "where we make our money."

Over the years Biggs has had a variety of machines and will keep its Konica 612 for basic d&p work with the QD-21 dedicated to APS and digital output. Neil said they felt it was time to upgrade and were especially interested in printing from the floppy, CD, smart cards and other digital media. The store does its own E-6, has two creaky Create-A-Prints and a complete portrait studio.

Neil and Steve received the QD-21 only a few weeks before I spoke to them. However, they are not new to digital. They own a Pixel Magic setup on which they do restoration, slide presentations, etc. and have two full timers devoted to that service. There is a high level of comfort when talking to their customer about digital products.

Are customers concerned about what a digital print would look like? Neil said that to satisfy a doubting Thomas customer he printed the same frame on the 612 and the QD-21 and the digital was even sharper.

Steve said that for the first month, it was his plan to lay low on promotion until the staff was oriented to the new system and its output. The kickoff was scheduled for mid-July. He expects to use stuffers in bags along with in-store signage. Plans are for mass media advertising on radio and in newspapers, where they will concentrate in the business section pages.

The Biggs are working on their pricing schedule and, because of their other services, may be in a little better position than many others. A customer bringing in a new roll for d&p can get the images returned on a CD for an additional \$12. (Steve feels he will discourage output to floppy because of the low resolution.) For a 4 x 6 print from any digital media (zip, CD, smart card, floppy, etc.) Biggs will charge \$1.49 but will have a minimum charge of \$5 for opening the media.

Biggs is a member of the Pro Group and Nell said they are checking with others in the fraternity for pricing advice.

Patrick's Photo & Portraits, Orange, CA: Bruce and Diane Patrick opened their 1,400 sq. ft. lab in a strip mall in this densely populated area 13 years ago with a Noritsu 701 and 602 enlarger. Both machines are still in place and will stay there until Bruce is satisfied that the QD-21 and Konica workstation that he installed in April will do the job. Because of his portrait work, he may hold onto the 701 to handle 2-1/4-inch film, which cannot be processed on the Konica system.

For the first month, Bruce didn't tell customers that he was printing on a new machine. There were some comments that the pictures "looked different." He feels that his customers are completely satisfied with the quality of their prints.

For now, Bruce said his focus will be on the output-to-print from the various digital sources. His concept is to charge for the digital service as if it were a developing service. In other words, he will charge \$3.75 to open any digital medium, and then levy the regular per-print price of 50-cents each.

For print-to-print, Bruce is charging the same as he has been for the Fuji Pictrostat (which he intends to get rid of) print of \$12.50. Output to floppy will cost a customer \$3.95 and to CD, \$9.95.

The new services can bring in new business: Bruce did his first order for 15 calendars of an 8 x 10 image on an 11 x 16 print. "Pricing this order was a problem," he added.

A big, 4 x 11-ft. outdoor sign hawks Patricks' new digital services. When he feels he's ready, Bruce will kick off a 14-week marketing program that will include such elements as stuffers and indoor signage.

Bruce feels that his major emphasis will be "to grow our customer base." Might he lose business to customers shooting with digital cameras? "The idea of customers printing at home is pretty limited," he said.

A little advice

Aside to manufacturers who will soon be shipping their own line of digitals: prepare for your dealers a complete list of products that your system is capable of producing with some suggestions as to pricing philosophies; make available a wide variety of in-store merchandising/promotion materials to assist the dealer in communicating his new services to the customer. Everyone will benefit.

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RELATED ARTICLE: Konica's Digi-Growth Warrants New West Coast Resource Center

Konica Business Technologies, Inc. recently announced the addition of a new West Coast Resource Center in Huntington Beach, California. The company told PTN that construction of the new facility was fueled by, "Konica's growth in the digital market, with a 260% increase in sales from last year."

For Now ... Document Imaging

The 280,000 square foot Resource Center resides on 12.3 acres in the McDonnell Center Business Park in Huntington Beach. The Resource Center will house print controller and software development, "thus shortening time to market and reducing distribution costs. The facility will also serve as a technical training facility, as well as a West Coast warehouse and distribution center," a company spokesperson explained.

"Konica's print controllers are an integral element in the process of digital document creation and distribution in the office environment. As corporations move toward implementing digital office solutions for the future, Konica is at the forefront of innovation to provide them with the document technology that they will need," said Kevin Kern, vice president of product development and support. "This new facility will be a center for development of digital office solution technology and develop print controllers for worldwide distribution," Kern added.

Designed by DeRevere & Associates and constructed by General Contractor E.E. Wentz Co., the two-story research and development center and West Coast training classroom will initially employ 150 people.

No word yet on whether or not this new facility will eventually grow to encompass Konica's digital imaging business segments.

#### The Other Konica

Many of you may not be familiar with the Konica Business Technologies, Inc., division -- headquartered in Windsor, Conn. This division of Konica provides digital solutions for document creation, distribution and production. The company, beyond all the wonderful products in the imaging division, offers a full line of printers, multifunction and copier products through direct sales offices, authorized dealers, resellers and distribution partners located in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America and South America. For more information, please visit Konica on the World Wide Web at <http://www.konica.com>.

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PUBLISHER NAME: Cygnus Publishing

COMPANY NAMES: \*Konica Business Technologies Inc.

EVENT NAMES: \*360 (Services information); 330 (Product information)

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: \*1USA (United States)

PRODUCT NAMES: \*7221000 (Photographic Services)

INDUSTRY NAMES: ARTS (Arts and Entertainment); BUSN (Any type of business)

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NAICS CODES: 541921 (Photography Studios, Portrait)

SPECIAL FEATURES: LOB; COMPANY

10/9/15 (Item 3 from file: 47)

DIALOG(R)File 47:Gale Group Magazine DB(TM)

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05387717 SUPPLIER NUMBER: 54890919 (THIS IS THE FULL TEXT)

**The home user: home PCs come in a host of flavors, and prices range widely. (an ideal computer system) (Buyers Guide)**

PC Magazine, 146

July 1, 1999

DOCUMENT TYPE: Buyers Guide ISSN: 0888-8507 LANGUAGE: English

RECORD TYPE: Fulltext; Abstract

WORD COUNT: 4975 LINE COUNT: 00377

**ABSTRACT:** The ideal PC for a family to use at home will be suited to various tasks, ranging from Web surfing and game playing to managing personal finances and telecommuting. A computer built around an Intel Celeron/466 or an AMD K6-II/400 is recommended. Other components might include 128MB of RAM, a 10GB Ultra DMA/33 hard disk, a 16MB 2-D/3-D graphics accelerator, a 17-inch monitor, a 56.6K V.90 modem, a 6X DVD-ROM drive, a 100 or 250MB Iomega Zip drive and a 3-D sound card.

**TEXT:**

You Are...

buying a primary PC for your family for a variety of tasks: Web surfing, game playing, home finance, or working at home.

looking for a PC for a parent or grandparent so you can be in touch via e-mail.

in the market for a bare-bones PC to get on the Internet for the lowest cost.

putting together a killer game system.

thinking about an affordable, portable PC that can be taken to school or on the occasional trip.

You Need...

Celeron/466 or AMD K6-II/400 processor

128MB RAM

10GB Ultra DMA/33 hard disk

16MB 2-D/3-D graphics accelerator

17-inch monitor (0.28-mm mask pitch maximum; 1,024-by-768 resolution

at 85-Hz refresh minimum)

56.6K V.90 modem (network card for cable or DSL modem where high-speed service is available)

6X DVD-ROM drive

100MB or 250MB Iomega Zip Drive

3-D sound card

three-piece speaker set

Microsoft Windows 98

Internet keys

also: three-year warranty, one-year telephone support, lifetime Web support, 30-day ISP trial membership

\$1,500

**LOW-COST INTERNET PC:** AMD, Celeron, or Cyrix processor; 32MB RAM, 2GB to 4GB hard disk, 4MB video RAM, 15- or 17-inch monitor, 56.6K V.90 modem, available PCI slot for high-speed modem upgrade, 24X CD-ROM drive, stereo speakers

\$700

You Need...For The Gamer:

Pentium III/450 processor

128MB RAM

10GB to 20GB Ultra DMA/66 hard disk

32MB 2-D/3-D graphics accelerator (ATI Rage 128 or nVidia TNT-2 chip

set recommended)

19-inch monitor (0.28-mm mask pitch maximum; 1,024- by-768 resolution at 85-Hz refresh)

cable or DSL modem (where high-speed service is available)

6X DVD-ROM drive

3-D sound card

five-piece speaker system

force-feedback joystick

Microsoft Windows 98

\$2,800

You Need...For The Road:

Celeron/366 or AMD Mobile K6-2 processor

64MB RAM

4GB to 10GB hard disk

5MB 2-D/3-D graphics subsystem

13-inch TFT display

Type III PC Card slot with a 56.6K V.90 PC Card modem

built-in 24X CD-ROM drive or 4X DVD-ROM drive

built-in floppy disk drive

built-in stereo speakers

also: dedicated Internet keys, CD controls, Microsoft Windows 98, three-year

warranty, one-year telephone support, lifetime Web support, 30-day ISP trial membership

8 pounds, \$2,000

Typical home PC buyers are in an interesting predicament: They want to spend as little as possible, but some of the reasons for buying a home PC--digital imaging, DVDs, and especially games--often demand fairly high-powered hardware. By allocating resources carefully, you can put together a balanced system and still stay within budget.

Beyond the Box

Before we get into the nuts and bolts of the hardware, we want to draw your attention to issues that might not get mentioned in the computer superstore but will have plenty to do with your satisfaction.

PC makers have come a long way in improving the set-up process, especially for novice users. Look for easy-to-follow quick-start guides and color-coded connections. Since the first thing home users want to do is connect to the Internet, ask whether the set-up routine includes a wizard that can get you on the Web with just a few mouse clicks. Also, most name-brand PCs now include a trial membership (typically 30 days) with an Internet service provider (ISP) to get you started.

Pay close attention to the service and support options that are included. The new breed of ultra-low-price PCs need to make cuts somewhere, and technical support is often included only for a few weeks after purchase. We recommend buyers look for a three-year warranty, with toll-free technical support for the duration of the warranty. Another tip: Check the hours that technical support is available. Are the phone lines staffed at night and on weekends, when you are most likely to have questions? Finally, be open to bundles. If you are starting from scratch and need a printer and a scanner in addition to the basics, a package deal may be the way to go. Your printer and scanner won't be high-end, but if they are name-brand equipment, they are likely good enough.

The Hardware

You can spend as little as \$500 or as much as \$3,000 for a PC categorized as a "home" machine, and we have recommendations for such machines below. But for a general-purpose PC that delivers the right mix of performance, peripherals, and hand-holding, our perfect PC specs out to about \$1,500.

For that money, you should expect a Celeron/466 or AMD K6-2/400 processor. These chips deliver enough power for most home tasks yet leave

enough in your budget for other extras. We also recommend 128MB of RAM, which will boost overall system performance. Also more memory means you can have more applications open concurrently.

If you aren't a big game player, any of the current graphics chips will deliver adequate 3-D (not to mention more-than-adequate 2-D). Do outfit the card with 16MB of video RAM. That will let you run at a higher resolution (1,024-by-768) and color depth on the 17-inch monitor we suggest, as well as run the latest 3-D games. The extra screen real estate also lets you see more of a Web page at a single glance.

Home users will find themselves using up storage space fairly quickly. CD- and DVD-ROM titles encourage you to install some of their files on your hard disk for best performance. There are all sorts of things on the Web you won't be able to live without (and worry that you won't be able to find again), not to mention the MP3 music files that are fast becoming the standard way to distribute music on the Web. And if you don't already have one, we predict it will be just a couple of years before you have a scanner, a digital camera, or even a digital video camera. And you'll need enough space to store the images when you're working with them and until you find time to off-load them to removable storage.

So we recommend a hard disk of at least 10GB. You will want a mechanism for archiving files. The best choice for home users is a 100MB or 250MB Iomega Zip Drive. You can get one builtin to your system from most PC makers (\$100 for the 100MB model, \$200 for the Zip 250), and the EIDE interface means that storing items will be fairly quick. If you want to share the drive among machines, then get an external model with a USB interface (so that you can leave your parallel port free for your printer).

Alternatively, you may want to consider investing in a CD-RW drive (\$350). You can store up to 650MB of data on either reusable media (\$10 apiece) or write-once CD-R disks (\$2 each). The CD-R disks have the added advantage of being readable with any CD-ROM or audio CD player, so you can, for example, share your digital image files with others or make your own music CDs.

Whether or not you opt for a CD-RW drive, we do recommend a DVD-ROM drive. Beyond the hundreds of movie titles available, there's a growing list of video-intensive multimedia games and edutainment titles available on DVD. We also recommend that you opt for a hardware DVD decoder. Our testing has shown that you need at least a Pentium III/400 chip to run DVD video smoothly without assistance; a Celeron or low-end Pentium II processor isn't powerful enough to deliver seamless video on its own.

If your area has cable modem service, we urge you to work it into your budget (\$150 for the modem; about \$50 for monthly service, which includes your ISP fees). The speed advantage over a 56.6K analog connection will vastly improve your Internet experience. Also look for a keyboard that has dedicated, programmable Internet keys to get you to your favorite sites with one touch.

#### Special-Purpose Machines

If your primary purpose is to get on the Web cheaply and if games, DVD, and digital imaging aren't in your plans, you can pare down your machine and save money. A low-cost AMD or Celeron processor is fine, with a 4MB video subsystem, 2GB to 4GB hard disk, 24X CD-ROM drive, and 15-inch monitor. You can find such a system for \$700 or even less.

If you are a hard-core gamer, you'll need to go in the other direction; expect to spend between \$2,500 and \$3,000. Specify a Pentium III/450 processor, 20GB UltraDMA/66 hard disk, 19-inch monitor, and five-piece surround-sound speaker set mated to a 3-D sound card. Perhaps the most important link in the chain is the graphics accelerator. You'll want a 32MB card based on one of the fastest 3-D chips currently available: either the ATI Rage 128, Matrox G400, nVidia TNT-2, or forthcoming 3Dfx's Voodoo3.

#### Software



Every new home PC comes equipped with Windows 98, and most makers bundle all the basic productivity software you'll need to get started. Beyond that, we recommend you load your machine with an anti-virus package such as Norton AntiVirus, an easy-to-use image editor (we like Microsoft Picture It!), an entry-level publishing program for newsletters and the like (Broderbund's PrintShop or Microsoft Publisher 2000), software for family-fun projects like calendars and greeting cards (Canon Creative and any from the PrintPaks series), and a clip-art package. You'll also want to download Web utilities: RealAudio and RealJukebox for enjoying music over the Web and Macromedia's Flash and Shockwave to enjoy cutting-edge multimedia content.

#### Home Networking

If your home has two or more computers, you will inevitably want to move files, share a printer, stream video and audio, or share Internet access between them. Sharing involves networking, and you have plenty of affordable home network options. The challenges of successful home networking come in finding help when things don't work, setting up laptops already configured for wired offices, handling IP addressing, and maintaining security from Internet intruders.

Despite the slew of products on the market that use no wires at all or your home's existing phone or electrical wires, our idea of the perfect home network uses good old Ethernet. Retail stores carry 10-Mbps Ethernet adapters for all kinds of equipment. The retail price of a PC adapter hovers around \$40. You'll need a hub (again around \$40) and some cables with connectors. Many manufacturers sell complete kits, but Ethernet adapters and hubs from different manufacturers work together. Ethernet is fast, standardized, and widely available. Many vendors and VARs provide help with Ethernet questions, and your laptop equipped for Ethernet at work can easily interact with your Ethernet LAN at home.

The drawback to standard Ethernet is that you have to run cables between the devices on the network. The Ethernet cable, called unshielded twisted-pair (or UTP), is only a little more than a quarter of an inch thick and can easily run behind desks and even along or under carpeting. You can fish it through walls, or hire an electrician to pull it for you (typically about \$100 to \$150 per room).

Sharing an Internet access is the biggest goal and challenge for home networkers. You'll want a function called network address translation (NAT) for handling IP addresses inside and outside the LAN and for some protection from intrusion. These functions can come from a dedicated piece of hardware (Ramp Networks has been a leader here) or from software, such as WinProxy Lite, from Ositis Software, or WinGate, from Deerfield Communications, running in a PC.

#### User Tips

Read the fine print. That deal that looks too good to be true may be: The low ball system prices often leave out the monitor (add \$250) and sometimes even basic software (another \$200).

Let them guide you. If you are a technical novice, opt for a brand that includes a quick-start guide and color-coded cables and connections.

Get on the Net. Be sure the setup routine includes a wizard that walks you through the steps to get on the Internet--and be sure a free trial membership (typically 30 days) is offered for a major ISP.

How's the timing? Check that the company offers technical support on nights and weekends--when most home users will most likely call.

Call your cable company. Check to see whether cable modem or DSL service is available in your area. The high-speed connection makes surfing the Internet much more enjoyable.

#### What You Get from the Top Companies

Acer America Corp. A member of the Acer Group and the third-largest PC manufacturer in the world according to IDC, Acer has recently opened its own online store at [www.shopacer.com](http://www.shopacer.com). The easy-to-navigate site offers PCs

based on three criteria: lowest price, best value, and high performance. Surprisingly, there is no way to tailor your selection of PC, other than to add a printer or scanner. If you are a registered customer, your address information is entered from memory; you just pick the method of shipment and enter your credit card information.

The primary case for the home line, the Acer Aspire series, is a stylish microtower, although not as colorful as the 1996 Aspires that came in charcoal and emerald. (Now, however, it's easier to match colors with non-Acer monitors.) It offers decent room for expansion: One drive bay of each size is open, and two USB ports are free (one on the back of the system and one on the keyboard). Two PCI slots are free as well. Additional features on the keyboard include a volume knob, a mute button, a sleep button, and a quick-launch Internet button. Another nice touch is the model-specific setup videos that are resident on the hard disk.

Acer's warranty covers one year of parts and labor--meager in comparison with the other competitors. This could account for Acer's overall grade of E on our Service and Reliability Survey. All Aspire systems come with Acer's TimeMachine Technology--a recovery utility: If you have a system problem caused by new software, new hardware, or a damaged file, you simply roll back your configuration to an earlier one that worked. Support includes e-mail queries, toll-free technical support, and an online tips and tricks section. (San Jose, CA; 800-733- 2237; [www.shopacer.com](http://www.shopacer.com).)

Apple Computer Corp. Once-moribund Apple is today the purveyor of some of the hottest, best-designed computers on the market, the iMac and the Power Macintosh G3. Taking a cue from their traditional markets--graphic design and education--the new Apples are bright, beautiful, futuristic yet retro, and easy to use.

Apple's Web site offers information on the two systems listed above as well as software and other options. When you're purchasing an iMac online, the only options are to increase memory and to add peripherals like printers and Iomega Zip Drives. But the Web site lets you file for an Apple loan or lease agreement and even provides a calculator for figuring out the cost of your monthly payments. (The ordering process for the Macintosh G3 is significantly more customizable, with many more drop-down menus.)

The iMac, based on the 333-MHz PowerPC G3 CPU, comes in five glorious colors: strawberry, lime, tangerine, grape, and blueberry. A 6GB hard disk, two USB ports, an ATI Rage Pro Turbo card, and a built-in 56K modem come ready to use; all you need to do is plug in the power cord and modem and attach the keyboard and mouse. Online support includes plenty of information on start-up issues, peripherals problems, and software updates. Apple receives a B grade on our Service and Reliability Survey. (Cupertino, CA; 800-795-1000; [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com).)

CompUSA. One of the biggest computer megastores and long a venue for other brands, CompUSA offers its own brand line through the retail channel as well as online. Pointing your browser to [www.compusa.com](http://www.compusa.com) leads you to two standalone sites (and, in fact, separate divisions of the company), [CompUSANet.com](http://CompUSANet.com) and [CompUSAstores.com](http://CompUSAstores.com).

The CompUSANet Web site offers brand-name systems for sale, including the CompUSA PC brand for the time being. It is a robust site, with plenty of drop-down menus for configuring your system and a way to check the status of your order. Besides a standard one-year parts-and- labor warranty, the vendor offers a ten-day satisfaction guarantee (though you will be charged a restocking fee). The site does not offer driver updates or any other form of technical support aside from the technical-support phone numbers.

The CompUSAstores Web site is bland for now, including only information about the stores, store specials, promotional events, technical services and training, and company history. You can not configure or order PCs. At press time, CompUSA was in the middle of redesigning its case

options, but no specific information was available. CompUSA receives an overall grade of C on our Service and Reliability Survey. (Dallas; 888-266-6772, 508-480-8500; [www.compusa.com](http://www.compusa.com).)

Compaq Computer Corp. A relative newcomer to the direct world, Compaq still sells systems through retailers and service centers. The Presario, Compaq's home/home-office line, comes in several models--the 5000, 5100, 5200, and 5600 series--which are powered by Intel or AMD CPUs, depending on the system. Prices start at \$599 (for the 5070), which includes two USB ports for easy connectivity and a keyboard with one-touch access to the Internet.

One of the more interesting features of Compaq's easy-to-use and informative Web site is the Selection Assistant, a guide that matches you with a Compaq computer by covering areas such as About You, Usage Environment, User Needs, and Price Range. Online configuration is fairly customizable, with plenty of drop-down menus. Additionally, the site offers downloadable drivers, patches, and FAQs as well as installation, technical, and software guides. Another nice touch: There's an 800 number at the bottom of each page on the site.

The typical warranty of one year parts-and-labor service with 90 days of on-site service (very low for the industry, and some Compaq models offer none at all) can be upgraded to three years parts, three years on-site for an additional fee. For home PCs, Compaq receives a grade of E on our Service and Reliability Survey. (Houston; 800-345-1518; [www.compaq.com](http://www.compaq.com).)

Dell Computer Corp. The Big Daddy of direct vendors, Dell Computer Corp. sells systems via phone and the Internet, with an almost exact split between the two these days. Not surprisingly, the company's Web site is comprehensive and easy to navigate. Also not surprising, Dell earns an A for its home PCs on our Service and Reliability Survey.

Dell's new home line, the Dimension L, is housed in a compact and sturdy microtower. Its crowning achievement is the one-touch-open case. Traditional Dell design coups are still present (swing-out power supply, slide-out drives, and the service tag number), and another one debuts, the Dell Diagnostic LED, which provides a quick diagnosis of video failures.

Since going to the sub-\$1,000 price point, Dell has maintained its three-year parts-and-labor warranty policy, which still includes one year of on-site service and lifetime toll-free technical support. Its online support is top-notch: Plugging in your service tag number gets you driver updates and news specific to your system, and registering for FileWatch gets you an e-mail alert. Dell's Knowledge Base is constantly updated by technicians and customers, and this information is fed into Ask Dudley!, a natural-language-based query system. Last, Dell Talk Forum is a public discussion forum for customers to talk to each other--and it's not censored for content, only for accuracy. (Round Rock, TX; 800-388-8542; [www.dell.com](http://www.dell.com).)

Gateway. Gateway, another direct powerhouse, has recently redesigned its Web page. Although the site is now fairly straightforward and easy to use, it could still benefit from some fine tuning. Specifically, since Gateway is a build-to-order shop, the Customize option could be more obvious.

That said, Gateway's online support is excellent. Technical support includes hot topics like virus warnings and year 2000 compliance tests, as well as driver downloads for hardware and software, tech tips, and FAQs. Most impressive are the technical documents and jumper settings for an incredible array of hardware.

There are two lines available for the home, Essential and Select, available online, over the phone, or from a local Gateway Country Store. The Essential line, which starts at \$699, is based on the Intel Celeron CPU, with 32MB of RAM, integrated graphics, and a one-year parts-and-labor warranty. The Select line starts at \$999 and is based on AMD CPUs, with 64MB of RAM, integrated graphics, and a one-year parts-and-labor warranty.

(A higher-end Performance line appeals to power users.) Gateway receives a C for home PCs on our Service and Reliability Survey. (North Sioux City, SD; 800-315-2536; [www.gateway.com](http://www.gateway.com).)

Hewlett-Packard Co. HP offers PCs, printers, digital-imaging products, monitors, software, and various accessories worldwide; with so much to choose from, the Help Me Choose sections on HP's Web site are particularly useful. HP receives a grade of C on our Service and Reliability Survey for home PCs.

HP's Pavilion home systems come in three series. The Pavilion 4000 Series has a small form factor at a low price, using a Celeron or AMD K6-2 CPU. The Pavilion 6000 series, also in a microtower case, can include a Celeron or a Pentium II. The Pavilion 8000 series is more high-end, typically with a Pentium III CPU under the hood, integrated networking, a DVD drive, and HP's CD-Writer Plus. Certain systems are available only at resellers and retail stores, while others are available only via the Web.

Support includes HP Help, a preloaded application with animated tutorials, FAQs, and a glossary of PC terms. It is updatable via the Web. Online support includes HP Customer Care, which provides drivers, maintenance tips, troubleshooting documents, and a community forum, all based on your model of Pavilion. One complaint with HP's Web sites: Each section (Shopping Village, Customer Care) opens a new browser window. (Palo Alto, CA; 800-322-4772; [www.hp.com](http://www.hp.com).)

IBM Corp. IBM's entry- to mid-level offering, the Aptiva E microtower, is standard beige across the line, unlike the racy black design of the S Series. Yet it is not without its merits: A standard configuration offers one free internal hard disk bay, two free expansion slots, and two free USB ports. All Aptiva E systems include the IBM RapidAccess keyboard which offers four programmable buttons (for the Internet, games, applications, and so on), IBM ViaVoice software for voice- dictation functions, and a headset microphone. Some of the models also include the IBM ScrollPoint mouse.

Purchasing options include IBM-certified resellers, the Web, phone, and fax. Ordering online is easy, but the systems aren't very customizable. All Aptivas include a one-year parts-and-labor warranty, which is short compared with other vendors' offerings but is boosted by IBM's Owner Privileges, a program that includes toll-free preferred-caller handling for the period of the warranty, productivity tips via e-mail, a FAQ database of help questions, and Update Connector--information on updating your PC and new drivers. For the seventh year, IBM receives an A overall on our Service and Reliability Survey and also receives an A for home PCs. (Armonk, NY; 800-426-7255; [www.ibm.com](http://www.ibm.com).)

Micron Electronics. Micron PC is a subsidiary of Micron Electronics, the third-largest computer seller via the direct channel. The company's home lines, the Millennia and the Millennia Max, come in a choice of desktop, mini-tower, and full-tower cases. The full tower is a gigantic case that opens easily and offers room for expansion. There's even housing for adding more cooling fans. One thing: There are no USB ports on the front of the case. On the plus side, each system includes an Internet wizard (providing 30 days of free access) and a year's subscription to Micron University (for computer-related classes on the Web).

Micron's Web site is as comprehensive as it is easy to use. The information on the Millennia is exhaustive, including explanations regarding the technology behind every piece of hardware. Each system is highly customizable, and a slew of options and peripherals are also available. Micron receives an overall grade of B on our Service and Reliability Survey. Its online support includes FAQs, Desktop Knowledge Base, Desktop File Library, and support contacts. There is also a section on Y2K information and a way to track your order status. (Nampa, ID; 888-634-8799; [www.micronpc.com](http://www.micronpc.com).)

Packard Bell/NEC. Packard Bell and NEC merged in 1996 to form Packard

Bell/NEC, with Packard Bell handling the consumer sector and NEC offering commercial systems. The consumer section includes all Packard Bell-branded systems as well as the NEC Ready desktops and notebooks.

The Ready desktop is housed in a big case that opens with thumbscrews. That's the easy part; the side panel, however, is hard to remove. Although the case offers three free drive bays, the micro ATX motherboard does not reach all of the expansion cut outs, it offers only open slots.

The online support section includes FAQs, downloads, a knowledge base, a message board, and a how-to section. You can also customize the support center by registering your system's serial number online.

The Packard Bell brand receives a low grade of E for home PCs on our Service and Reliability Survey; NEC gets a C for home PCs. (Sacramento, CA; Packard Bell sales, 800-733-5858; [www.packardbell.com](http://www.packardbell.com). NEC Computer Systems Division, 888-863-2669; [www.neccomputers.com](http://www.neccomputers.com).)

Sony Electronics. Sony has its tentacles in all aspects of today's pop culture: music, video games, movies, TV, and computers. Just try getting to the computer section of Sony's vast Web site without getting distracted; after all, there's Jeopardy Online beckoning you. Sony computers are available online at Sony VAIO Direct, as well as through retail channels such as Circuit City, mail order such as PC Zone, and national distributors.

Online purchasing is limited. The last time we looked, only one desktop was available for purchase online, but there were at least ten monitors available. Online support, however, is more robust and includes a knowledge database, FAQs, year-2000 compliance information, error messages, and news.

The Sony VAIO Slimtop LCD Computer is so compact you might just lose it on your desk. A 14.1-inch LCD comes on a dual-hinged pedestal for flexible viewing; the wrist rest folds up to protect the keyboard, which includes six hot buttons for the Internet and favorite applications; and the Slimtop case is as thin as a pizza box. The Memory Stick digital media technology accepts 4MB and 8MB memory sticks, each the size of a stick of gum. The Slimtop currently offers only a CD-ROM drive rather than a DVD-ROM drive. There's a more traditionally styled Sony VAIO Digital Studio mini-tower PC offering IEEE 1394 (also called FireWire) connections for capturing and then editing movies from digital video cameras. Sony gets a C for home PCs on our Service and Reliability Survey. (San Jose, CA; 888-476-6972; [www.sony.com/pc](http://www.sony.com/pc).)

Editors' Hot Links  
Family PC Magazine  
[www.familypc.com](http://www.familypc.com)

This site, the Web component of our sister publication Family PC, is our favorite source for family-friendly hardware and software reviews and information (next to [www.pcmag.com](http://www.pcmag.com), of course).

Ask Jeeves for Kids  
[www.ajkids.com](http://www.ajkids.com)

This is the best search site that we've found geared specifically for kids. The interface is intuitive, and the search box lets school-age kids enter questions in full sentences (it'll even check their spelling). Best of all, you don't have to worry about a search turning up an errant XXX site.

Music on the Web  
[www.mp3.com](http://www.mp3.com)  
[www.musicmatch.com](http://www.musicmatch.com)

These sites are the leading providers of MP3-encoded music. Log on to download an MP3 player and compressed music files (some free, some at a nominal cost). Turn your hard disk into your personal jukebox.

iVillage  
[www.ivillage.com](http://www.ivillage.com)

One of the first and largest sites dedicated specifically to women and the family, iVillage features news and tips on health, relationships, career, food, finances, and more.

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DESCRIPTORS: Computer industry--Products; Microcomputers--Purchasing

GEOGRAPHIC CODES/NAMES: 1USA United States

PRODUCT/INDUSTRY NAMES: 3573121 (Intel-Compatible Microcomputers);

3573293 (Computer Graphics, Sound and Video Processors); 3573120

(Microcomputers)

NAICS CODES: 334111 Electronic Computer Manufacturing; 334119 Other

Computer Peripheral Equipment Manufacturing

FILE SEGMENT: CD File 275

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TS10/9/9 15

10/9/9 (Item 9 from file: 16)  
DIALOG(R) File 16:Gale Group PROMT(R)  
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Extra Copies

05811527 Supplier Number: 50316988 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)  
**Toro Selects SIGNAL Internet Technologies for Web-Based Warranty  
Registration And Claims Processing**  
PR Newswire, p915SFMTU03  
Sept 15, 1998  
Language: English Record Type: Fulltext  
Article Type: Article  
Document Type: Newswire; Trade  
Word Count: 729

## TEXT:

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 15 /PRNewswire/ -- SIGNAL Internet Technologies Inc. today announced that The Toro Company (NYSE: TTC), the Bloomington, Minn. manufacturer of landscaping products for homes, golf courses and commercial landscapes, is now using the SegWay Suite(TM), SIGNAL's comprehensive electronic commerce software solution, to provide Web-based warranty registration and claims processing for Toro's SAP R/3(TM) system. The application, which has been used by Toro dealers since this July, integrates warranty information from four different systems on the company's mainframe computer with a customer master file residing on a SAP R/3 client/server system. SIGNAL made the announcement at the SAP SAPPHIRE(R) user group event in Los Angeles, booth #559.

Dr. Cynthia Love, director of customer service systems for Toro, said Toro executives wanted a better way to support a worldwide community of customers. "We wanted to provide readily-accessible information and support to a disparate group of customers from 80 countries who use multiple currencies and languages. For example, we support about 145 distributors around the world, 6,000 to 6,500 dealers and million of consumers as well as resorts, amusement parks and other types of facilities that use our outdoor landscape products."

Love said Toro determined that 63% of their customer base had Internet access, so the company decided to build a system that customers could access over the Internet using a Web browser. During their search for a software application developer, they received bids from 20 different companies, including SIGNAL. Toro's Manger of Continuous Improvement, Gayle Tangen said, "We chose SIGNAL because they could guarantee to match the e-commerce application with our existing business processes, and deliver a completed system within 90 days. They also had a proven track record with other companies such as Michelin, and understood the dynamics of the warranty process from the end-user perspective." Tangen added that SIGNAL was able to implement the system in only 60 days using its GateWay(TM) adapter for SAP systems.

"Users love the system," Love said. "It's easy to enter information from a standard Web browser, and dealers get instant credit for valid warranty claims. Previously, they had to wait 60 days for claims to be processed."

"The most rewarding aspect of our collaboration with Toro is that we've been able to help them improve responsiveness to their customers," said James Graham, SIGNAL's chief executive officer. "The industry has been talking a lot about the potential benefits of electronic commerce over the Internet for several years now. Systems such as the one we've implemented at Toro are delivering on that promise."

SIGNAL's SegWay Suite connects customers, distributors, suppliers, prospects and employees to legacy databases and systems. SegWay uses an intuitive interface and appropriate graphics to simplify the creation of

common business applications such as order management, invoice inquiry and order placement, reducing cost and complexity, and speeding deployment of a full-fledged business solution. The system architecture leverages the data from multiple sources within a single application. SegWay's tightly integrated "end-to-end" electronic commerce framework links a company's front- and back- office applications to external partners in the most complete solution available today.

#### About the Companies

The Toro Company has more than 4,000 employees around the world and is a leading provider of outdoor maintenance and beautification products for home, recreation and commercial landscapes. Information about Toro is available on the Web at <http://www.toro.com>.

SIGNAL Internet Technologies Inc., a national company headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania provides the software system necessary to implement electronic commerce. SIGNAL's systems use the Internet to securely connect customers, distributors, suppliers, prospects and employees, while protecting their investment in existing systems. Its product offering, SegWay Suite, includes e-business applications, a Web application development environment and complete electronic commerce framework. Information about SIGNAL and SegWay Suite is available on the Web at <http://www.signalnet.com>.

SOURCE SIGNAL Internet Technologies, Inc.

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09/15/98

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/Web site: <http://www.toro.com/>

/Web site: <http://www.signalnet.com/>

(TTC)

CO: SIGNAL Internet Technologies Inc.; The Toro Company

ST: California, Minnesota, Pennsylvania

IN: CPR MLM

SU:

KA-CS

-- SFMTU03 --

3156 09/15/98 13:30 EDT <http://www.prnewswire.com>

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PUBLISHER NAME: PR Newswire Association, Inc.

COMPANY NAMES: \*Toro Co.; SIGNAL Internet Technologies Inc.

EVENT NAMES: \*260 (General services); 330 (Product information)

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: \*1USA (United States)

PRODUCT NAMES: \*3524000 (Power Lawn & Garden Equip); 7372640  
(Electronic Commerce Software)

INDUSTRY NAMES: BUS (Business, General); BUSN (Any type of business)

NAICS CODES: 333112 (Lawn and Garden Tractor and Home Lawn and Garden  
Equipment Manufacturing); 51121 (Software Publishers)

SPECIAL FEATURES: LOB; COMPANY

10/9/15 (Item 3 from file: 47)

DIALOG(R) File 47:Gale Group Magazine DB(TM)



27/9/3 (Item 3 from file: 16)  
DIALOG(R) File 16:Gale Group PROMT(R)  
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06865178 Supplier Number: 58163729 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)

**Ofoto.com Launches Innovative Photo Finishing Service.**

PR Newswire, p0129

Dec 13, 1999

Language: English Record Type: Fulltext

Document Type: Newswire; Trade

Word Count: 574

**TEXT:**

Ofoto Delivers the Power and Convenience

Of Digital Photography to Millions of Consumers

BERKELEY, Calif., Dec. 13 /PRNewswire/ -- Ofoto Inc., the premiere e-commerce provider of photo finishing services, today announced the launch of a full service Web site (www.ofoto.com) that will deliver the power and convenience of digital photography to millions of consumers. The Ofoto service offers millions of digital camera and scanner owners, along with their friends and family, a convenient way to order high-quality, photographic prints of their own digital images. Ofoto also provides its members access to secure online photo storage and the ability to create albums in an advertising-free environment, all at no cost.

"We are enabling everyone to take advantage of the amazing convenience of digital photography," said James Joaquin, president and CEO, Ofoto. "With photo-quality digital cameras now under \$300, Ofoto offers the missing link to getting real photographic prints delivered with a convenient, easy to use, and very affordable, online photo finishing service."

**Transforming Traditional Photo Finishing**

The \$33 Billion photo finishing market is rapidly shifting to the Internet. According to Lyra Research the online photo finishing market is expected to be \$3.4 billion by 2002, almost 10% of the entire market in just three years. Ofoto provides consumers an online photo finishing and delivery solution offering convenience, quality, value and security.

\* Convenience -- Ofoto's easy to use Web site allows members to order photographic prints and have them delivered as quickly as the very next

day. There are no membership fees, lengthy registration or complicated

ordering processes. For the first time, consumers can now have their digital images conveniently printed and delivered on real

photographic

paper, instead of dealing with the hassles of ink-jet printers.

\* Quality -- Ofoto delivers archive quality, color prints on photographic

paper from Kodak. These prints are processed in Ofoto's own lab using the most advanced digital imaging technology.

\* Value -- Instead of having to develop entire rolls of traditional film,

digital photography has given people the freedom to order prints of just the photos they like, making Ofoto far more affordable than traditional photo finishing.

\* Security -- Once Ofoto members upload their photos to the site they are

stored in a private, secure, and advertising-free environment.

Members' albums are password-protected and available only to those who

are invited to view.

"Ofoto was founded on a very simple idea -- deliver the promise of

digital photography and don't forget the prints," said Kamran Mohsenin, founder and chief product officer, Ofoto. "We are very excited to be launching the most convenient photo finishing service on the Web that delivers real prints to real people."

Ofoto offers a variety of print sizes all at very affordable prices -- 4" X 6" prints for 49 cents, 5" X 7" prints for 99 cents and 8" X 10" prints for \$2.99. Because members can order prints of just the photos they like, Ofoto is far more affordable than traditional photo finishing solutions. Ofoto also offers a variety of elegant frames and framing services for special photographic prints and gift giving. Print quality is always guaranteed with a no questions asked satisfaction guarantee.

About Ofoto, Inc.

Founded in July 1999, Ofoto, Inc. is located in Berkeley, California. Ofoto is the premiere e-commerce photo finishing service for the rapidly expanding digital photography market. Our Web site, [www.ofoto.com](http://www.ofoto.com), is a comprehensive service that allows its members to order high quality photographic prints of their digital pictures and photo merchandise.

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